

# Touchmark experience captures national spotlight for Edmond North senior

Many things about Maggie Cannon are not typical of an 18-year-old. For instance, some of her good friends are 90 years old.

Instead of clocking in at the mall, she works for Touchmark. And rather than spend Spring Break hanging out at the beach, she was soaking up advice on how best to become a journalist.

The Edmond North senior is a long-serving reporter for the school newspaper Ruff Draft and works part time in Dining Services at Touchmark. A story she wrote for her school newspaper about this experience focused the national spotlight on her as one of two 2009 Free Spirit Scholars participating in the Al Neuharth Free Spirit

Scholarship and Journalism Conference Program.

“It’s rare that you find 90-year-olds and 18-year-olds who are actual friends,” Maggie says. “There is a group of us that work there, and we are all really good friends with the people who live at Touchmark.”

Her news feature describes (*cont.*)



Dining Room Server Maggie Cannon visits with Evelyn Clark (left) and Faye and Scott Kelsey. Maggie is one of 102 participants in the Al Neuharth Free Spirit Scholarship and Journalism Conference Program, which recognizes outstanding high school seniors—one male and one female from each state and the District of Columbia—who are interested in journalism and demonstrate a free spirit. Maggie’s application included photos and stories of Evelyn and other residents.

(cont.) the bonds between the Touchmark residents and high-schoolers. The mutual respect between Maggie and resident Evelyn Clark is evident. Evelyn is one of the residents Maggie featured in her winning portfolio, and Maggie says of her friend, “She’s really ‘with it,’ and that’s how I want to be.” And of the award-winner, Evelyn beams: “I think she’s going to make it, as long as she keeps trying.” Caregiving is something that comes naturally to Maggie, whose grandfather has lived with her family her entire life.

Maggie was chosen from among hundreds of students across the nation who were competing for scholarships and the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. as a Free Spirit Scholar. She said the body of work she submitted was mostly humor-based feature stories and contributed to the ‘free spirit’ aspect of the competition.

“I like the hands-on approach to reporting, and I think the kinds of stories I wrote and the way I reported them helped with the ‘free spirit,’ part of the process,” says Maggie.

Maggie was selected from the entire group to receive one of two \$10,000 college scholarships during her trip. “I was really surprised, because I thought regular people don’t win things like this,” she says. “It seems like you read about well-known people winning national awards.”

Jamie Ham, executive director of Touchmark at Coffee Creek, is proud of Maggie’s accomplishments and not surprised that she and the other students have developed strong ties with residents. “All of us at Touchmark congratulate Maggie on her achievement,” says Jamie. “She is well-deserving of this honor. Her stories capture the appeal of Touchmark’s vibrant lifestyle for some of Edmond’s finest residents.”

More than 130 people live at Touchmark, and nearly everyone gathered Mar. 26 for a “town hall” meeting to congratulate their 18-year-old friend and sign an oversize card for her. Maggie plans to use her scholarship to attend the University of Oklahoma in the fall to major in—what else—journalism. ■

## Blankets layer on love



**Top: Faye Kelsey pours love and attention into a no-sew blanket for Project Linus. Residents and team members made blankets for this volunteer, nonprofit organization, which donates the blankets to terminally ill children. Middle: Judith Harris works on a pink project. Bottom: Alice Snyder (left) and Evelyn Clark work on a blanket’s edging.**

## Come home to Touchmark!

Enjoy your privacy while being close to friends, neighbors, and amenities galore. Apartment 241 offers carefree living with all the services Touchmark has to offer. The 645-square-foot studio apartment features a full kitchen and a large closet. Call or stop by today!



Picture yourself in this classic, comfortable Monroe home! Located at 3017 Touchmark Drive, it features two bedrooms and two bathrooms. A study with built-in bookcases offers a dedicated space for keeping life organized. Extra comforts include hardwood floors, plantation shutters, and wood trim throughout. Take a breath of fresh air, rain or shine, from your covered patio. This 1,864-square-foot home has an attached 450-square-foot garage with ample room for storage and parking your car out of the elements. And with our limited-time Special Savings Program offer, there has never been a better time to call Touchmark home.

## Brain a buzz ...

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*This puzzle has been provided by programmer/musician Jim Bumgardner, who creates software art and toys and is the creator of [www.krazydad.com](http://www.krazydad.com).*

**Sudoku is one of the best activities for brain development. Fill in the blank squares so that each row, each column, and each three-by-three block contain all of the digits 1 through 9.**

## Recent happenings



Bridge players (from left) Dorothy Rupe, Charles Barnes, Betty Johnson, and Dow Dozier chat while enjoying a friendly game. The group meets in the Game Room Tuesdays and Fridays from 1 to 3 pm.



Top: Virginia Vantrease (right) peruses pottery with daughter Sandy Mleko at Frankoma Pottery in Sapulpa. The store offers everything from decorative pieces to functional dinnerware. Bottom: Frankoma Pottery employee Kelly Shipley talks about the pottery-making process as well as the company's history and future plans. After a tour and shopping, the group enjoyed lunch at Freddie's Bar-B-Que.

## Humor helps



Marge Coalman, EdD  
Vice President of Wellness & Programs, Touchmark

Resilience is a quality that is hard to measure in people as compared to road surfaces, paint, and other finite objects. In the assessment of a life well-lived, **“Humor is mankind’s greatest blessing.”** However, it comes up over and over in the people I interview. —Mark Twain, author They say that a sense of humor is essential to navigating not only the aging process but life as we know it in 2009. Humor is an essential component of resilience and life balance.

The physiological and psychological benefits of *laughter* have been well-studied, as noted in the article I wrote for the International Council on Active Aging (*Is Laughter Really the Best Medicine*—November/December 2005). But a consistent sense of humor is less well-understood by the research community. What is known is that it requires optimism along with the ability to see through a problem with a positive perspective.

The research that has been done on humor focuses on the cognitive-response mechanism that occurs when people respond to comedy. Yet, interestingly, there is little commonality in what people will find humorous.

Perhaps the analysis is unimportant, as author E.B. White contends. The real importance of a sense of humor lies in helping us survive the bumps and potholes in life’s road and coming through with the ability to face the day (and tomorrow) with a smile.

Universally, people respond more positively to those around them who manifest and display humor and a positive perspective, even in adverse situations. These resilient individuals are not “starry-eyed optimists” out of touch with the hardships and stresses of life. They are realists who are able to maintain their perspective when others experience fear or depression.

(cont.)

(cont.) At Touchmark, there are many opportunities to share humor and optimism. For information on how to participate in the Life Enrichment/Wellness program planning and implementation, contact Cathy Bird, director. ■

## You said it!

*“Touchmark has such a wonderful staff. I’m also glad to live close to my family.”*

**Jennie Stinson**  
—Resident

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**Answers to the puzzle**

## Coming Events

### Saturday, April 4, 1 to 3 pm

Third-annual Easter egg hunt with Coffee Creek neighborhood. Invite your family and friends to hunt for candy-filled eggs, meet the Easter Bunny, decorate cookies, and more.

### Wednesday, April 8, 2:30 pm

Easter Tea. Fireside Dining Room. No charge.

### Tuesday, April 14, 3 pm

Winetasting at Touchmark’s Parkview model home. No charge.

### Friday, April 17, 8:30 am

Depart for Azalea Festival and lunch in Muskogee. Bring money for transportation and lunch.

### Saturday, April 18, 6:30 pm

Family Bingo Night. Invite your family and friends. Bingo cards are two for \$1. Grand Hall.

### Monday, April 20, 10 am

Art exhibition at Santa Fe Presbyterian Church in Edmond. No charge.

### Tuesday, April 28, 10 am

Newcomers Coffee in the Shortgrass Cafe.